

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for providing access control of pre-encrypted on-demand television content. Existing encryption capability for cable television services or the like is extended to handle pre-encrypted content from a server (12) that is requested on demand by a viewer at a user terminal (20). Alternatively, the pre-encrypted content (provided, e.g. by an encryption device (14)) can be broadcast or multicast from the server (12) to a group of viewers. The invention is upgradeable to facilitate implementations of entitlement control algorithms that vary in sophistication as the need dictates. Additionally, the method is extensible to enable access control of pre-encrypted content that is independent of the transport protocol used. Such protocols include, for example, MPEG-2 and Internet Protocol (IP) which may also utilize Public Key Cryptography.